

**CLAIMS**

1. A method of acquiring data includes the steps of

- 5 a) providing a first record set including a first unique number associated with a first person; a second unique number associated with a second person; a third unique number associated with a specific question, contained in a list of questions; and a fourth number being an answer to the specific question;
- 10 b) providing a second record set associated with the first record set, the second record set including a question code associated with the third unique number; and a statistical weight to be given to the fourth number;
- c) providing a third record set associated with the second record set, the third record set including a description reference of the question code; and
- 15 d) saving the first record set, the second record set, and the third record set in a database.

2. A method of acquiring data includes the steps of

- 20 a) providing a first record set including a first unique number associated with a first person; a second unique number associated with a second person; a third unique number associated with a specific question, contained in a list of questions; and a fourth number being an answer to the specific question;
- b) providing a second record set associated with the first record set, the second record set including a question code associated with the third

unique number; and a statistical weight to be given to the fourth number;

- 5 c) providing a third record set associated with the second record set, the third record set including a description reference of the question code;
- d) saving the first record set, the second record set, and the third record set in a database; and
- e) providing a fourth record set identifying financial data.
- 10 3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, in which any of the first record set, the second record set, the third record set, the fourth record set or the entire database are able to be jointly or separately transmitted to wherever required.
4. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the first person is a medical practitioner.
- 15 5. A method as claimed in claim 4, in which the first number is associated with the medical practitioner's national registration number.
6. A method as claimed in claim 4 or claim 5, in which the first number is associated with the medical practitioner's specialist qualifications and experience.
- 20 7. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the second number includes a check digit calculated by means of the Lunz method.
8. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the second person is a medical patient.

9. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the fourth number is adapted to indicate a true or false answer to a question associated with the third number.
- 5 10. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the first record set includes a fifth number associated with a date and time that the first person examined the second person.
11. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the first record set includes a sixth number adapted to be a check digit for verifying the validity of any other number contained in the first record set.
- 10 12. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the second record set includes a list of third unique numbers associated with all possible questions that can be asked.
13. A method as claimed in claim 12, in which each third unique number is associated with at least one further third unique number associated with a question which should be asked or answered.
- 15 14. A method as claimed in claim 12 or 13, in which each third unique number is associated with at least one further third unique number associated with a question which need not be asked or answered.
- 15 15. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the third record set includes a reference to a publication containing a description of the question code.
- 20 16. A method as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 15, in which the fourth record set includes three unique numbers.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16, in which the three unique numbers are respectively associated with a budgeted item, a budgeted value, and availability of funds.
18. A method as claimed in claim 17, in which the budgeted item is a type of  
5 treatment or medication required by the second person.
19. A method as claimed in claim 18, in which the budgeted value is a cost associated with the type of treatment or medication.
20. A method as claimed in claim 19, in which the availability of funds is  
10 retrieved from the second person's medical aid or bank account to cover the costs indicated by the budgeted value.
21. A method of acquiring data substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying schematic drawings.